

## Everyday people making a difference on college campuses: the tempered grassroots leadership tactics of faculty and staff

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This article describes a study of the tactics used by faculty and staff grassroots leaders at colleges and universities to create important changes that increase the capacity for leadership. The study identifies how academic and administrative staff, as employees within an academic culture, have access to grassroots leadership tactics that honor the norms, values and mission of the academy, while simultaneously challenging its enacted practices. The nine tactics identified are: organizing extra-curricular intellectual opportunities; creating professional development; leveraging curricula and using classrooms as forums; working with and mentoring students; hiring like-minded social activists; garnering resources and support; using data to tell a story; joining in – utilizing existing networks; and partnering with key external stakeholders. The study complements and adds to the grassroots leadership literature by suggesting that grassroots leadership can occur within institutionalized settings, with the techniques for change modified to fit the organizational context, in this case academic settings.

**Keywords:** leadership; change; academic and administrative staff; grassroots

College campuses worldwide are faced with pressures to respond to a variety of challenges from changing demographics, globalization, technology, accountability and new pedagogical approaches. In recent years, there has been concern about the capacity for institutions to respond, particularly as the number of change initiatives mounts (Birnbaum 1992; Eckel and Kezar 2003). But research outside education suggests that there may be important grassroots forms of leadership that go untapped, and that are not understood well by organizational constituents such as boards, administrators, alumni or community groups (Meyerson 2003). The leadership literature in higher education continues to be dominated by studies of presidents, rectors, vice-chancellors, provost, pro-vice-rectors and deans, and we know little about the leadership capacity or activities of others on campus (Birnbaum 1992).

However, outside education, within the social movement literature, there have been studies of grassroots leaders demonstrating the way that they have contributed to important societal changes (Bernal 1998; Bettencourt 1996; Bettencourt, Dillman, and Wollman 1996; Kroeker 1996; Wilson 1973; Wittig 1996). Grassroots leadership is defined in the social movement literature as the stimulation of social change or the challenge of the status quo by those who lack formal authority, delegated power or 'institutionalized methods for doing so' (Wilson 1973, 32). The thought of grassroots

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leadership also elicits images of overt change tactics and direct action, such as pickets, rallies and demonstrations. Other examples, such as Rosa Parks not moving to the back of the bus, though, hint at the possibility that social change can be stimulated by simple acts that challenge dominant ways of thinking.

Many recent scholars argue that grassroots leadership is not always exercised in such public and extreme ways, or outside institutional settings (Meyerson 2003). Some scholars suggest that grassroots leadership takes place every day within institutional settings. Meyerson (2003) adopted the concepts from social movement theory – in particular grassroots leadership – and applied these concepts within institutional settings to identify how institutional agents can also act in ways similar to grassroots leaders, creating change from the bottom up, but do so in a distinctive way that she labeled ‘tempered radicals’. Tempered radicals believe they can do more good by staying within the organization, and temper their activities and strategies to create change from the bottom up. Tempered radicals are grassroots leaders because they are the following: working to create change, operating from the bottom up, lacking formal authority and creating changes often outside the status quo. Meyerson’s framework describes simple acts that change the nature of the workplace over time – staff who support the hiring of minority candidates and create a mentoring network for under-represented minorities in the workplace, or the creation of a recycling program that leads to a sustainability initiative for the corporation. Tempered radicals are also different from distributed leadership, as they are not connected to or endorsed by top-down leaders (Spillane and Diamond 2007). While grassroots leadership has been studied in corporate settings, this concept has not been examined in non-profit or educational settings.

This article describes a study of the tactics used by faculty and staff grassroots leaders in colleges and universities. In the United States context, where the study was conducted, faculty refers to the individuals who teach and conduct research (often termed academic staff internationally), while staff are individuals who have non-instructional responsibilities such as student affairs, admissions, alumni affairs, fund-raising or business affairs (often termed administrative staff internationally). However, staff are not administrators in the United States, as administrators have formal positions where they are delegated authority from the board of trustees and work more directly with the president and top-level leadership.

Like the individuals in Meyerson’s study, these faculty and staff grassroots leaders lack the position, power and authority to organize and mandate change from the top down, particularly as it relates to overall direction and decisions for the organization; they are not presidents, chancellors, rectors, deans or department chairs. Faculty and staff are working for changes largely unsupported by their organizations, and which can create major change in the values and direction of the campus (Meyerson 2003). The study of the leadership tactics used by faculty and staff who have little formal authority to create organizational change is not entirely novel; it has been studied by a few higher education scholars over the years, typically describing the difficulty of creating such change (for example, Allen and Estler 2005; Astin and Leland 1991; Safarik 2003; Theodore 1986; Wolf-Wendel et al. 2004). More specifically, Wolf-Wendel et al. (2004) offer a retrospective account of the role student affairs staff played in the civil rights movement to bring about change on college campuses. Safarik (2003) and Hart (2005, 2007, 2008) studied women faculty activists, and how they exercise leadership from outside circles of campus power to transform the curriculum, diversify faculty and staff, and change campus climate. However, these

few studies involved small samples, were conducted usually at a single campus, and centered on a specific change initiative such as starting a women's studies program. Also, none of these studies examined practical questions around tactics or strategies. All of these studies point to the difficulty of creating bottom-up change and the need for more studies of campus grassroots leaders. We build on this limited knowledge base through a broader-scale study of multiple campuses, different institutional types, with varying change initiatives, and with a much larger sample that focused specifically on tactical and strategic questions. Thus, this study is framed by the following research questions:

- (1) What are the grassroots leadership tactics used by faculty (academic staff) and staff (administrative staff)?
- (2) How are tactics distinctive or similar to the literature on grassroots leadership and tempered radicals?
- (3) How do these tactics differ by context?

Our study identified how academic and administrative staff, as employees within an academic culture, have access to grassroots leadership tactics that honor the norms, values and mission of the academy, while simultaneously challenging its enacted practices. The study complements and adds on to the grassroots leadership literature by suggesting that grassroots leadership can occur within organizations in ways that are not necessarily overt. Instead, we study how everyday people inside the organization can stimulate organizational change in quiet and persistent ways, that nonetheless challenge organizational practices and stimulate change (Meyerson 2003; Meyerson and Scully 1995; Scully and Segal 2002). In addition to advancing the scholarship of higher education leadership and grassroots leadership more broadly, findings also provide faculty and staff and other institutionally located grassroots leaders with helpful guidance (e.g. lessons learned, recommendations) for initiating and sustaining grassroots change efforts on their own campuses. As our interviewees noted, there is scant literature within higher education to guide faculty and staff grassroots leaders. Recent leadership books (e.g. Pearce and Conger 2003; Spillane and Diamond 2007) have emphasized the need for more shared models of leadership that include and help facilitate leadership throughout society or organizations. Knowing only about the tactics and approaches of those in positions of authority limits the capacity for leadership within organizations. Also, grassroots leaders develop changes that are unlikely to happen from the top down. Pressures on top-down leaders tend to focus on revenue generation, accountability and prestige seeking, while bottom-up leaders focus more on pedagogical changes, access and student support.

Our research suggests a host of different advantages to grassroots leadership on college campuses. Grassroots leaders on campus act as the conscience for the organization – often bringing up ethical issues. Many of the change initiatives championed by faculty and staff relate to underlying ethical dilemmas found broadly in society and campus life. For example, faculty and staff work to create rights and opportunities for custodial staff on campus who are being treated inequitably. Grassroots leaders also champion particular ethical issues in society, such as climate change, immigration rights, health care reform and access to college. Grassroots faculty and staff leaders can balance the corporate, revenue/prestige seeking model of top-down leadership. In the last 20 years, campuses have become increasingly corporate in their governance and management style (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). College presidents, once

intellectual leaders on campus, are now focused almost solely on fund-raising, marketing and public relations, and government and external relationships. Administrators are increasingly pressured to focus on the bottom line, and are less likely to help create dialogue around a quality teaching and learning environment. Grassroots leadership by faculty and staff plays a pivotal role in this academic capitalist environment, balancing the corporate interests with more academic ones.

While the study was conducted in the United States, the ideas and concepts are likely to have international application. The issue of leadership being studied predominantly among individuals within positions of power, and the lack of literature on bottom-up faculty and staff leaders, can be seen in the higher education literature worldwide. In terms of the findings being applicable to campuses in other countries (beyond the United States), faculty worldwide have many similar characteristics and roles. However, it should be noted that in certain countries, such as Mexico, or parts of South America, faculty generally have less power and authority than in the United States and Europe. Staff may vary more on campuses across the world, but student affairs is a growing field worldwide, and many of the staff areas we studied in the United States will have analogous groups within campuses worldwide. The campus contexts may differ, but the tactics we identify transcended different institutional contexts in the United States, and likely would be found internationally. However, it is important to think about differences in contexts that play out between different parts of the world such as those noted with faculty in South America.

### **Conceptual framework: grassroots leadership and tempered radicals**

Two theories are most helpful for understanding the leadership of faculty and staff grassroots leadership: grassroots leadership – part of social movement theory – and tempered radicals.

#### ***Grassroots leadership***

Grassroots leadership is embedded within the scholarship of social movement theory, and focuses on non-hierarchical and collective process (Bernal 1998; Bettencourt 1996; Bettencourt, Dillman, and Wollman 1996; Kroeker 1996; Wilson 1973; Wittig 1996). The grassroots literature emphasizes the actions of those who wish to create change or challenge the status quo, but are not in positions or roles that have the power to easily and directly create change. We wanted to make visible leadership that may have been silenced or made invisible within the academy (we know very little about faculty and staff leadership), and see if this leadership was characterized by some of the assumptions characteristic of grassroots leaders – such as being collective, adopting novel strategies and tactics, and navigating institutional power structures.

Since the focus of this particular article is on the tactics used by bottom-up leaders on college campuses, the grassroots literature is helpful in elucidating and describing activities and tactics within the leadership process that are not described within the dominant leadership literature on presidents and provosts, because the current literature concentrates on tactics used by those in formal power (Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin 2006). For example, the grassroots literature describes consciousness raising, empowerment, relationship building, collective action and networks, organizing, direct action (rallies, marches and picketing) and lobbying as common tactics that are not given ample consideration within leadership research (Bettencourt,

Dillman, and Wollman 1996; Kroeker 1996; Wittig 1996). Our study sought to identify whether grassroots leadership is helpful for understanding bottom-up leadership on college campuses – do faculty and staff use consciousness raising and mobilization rather than rewards or management controls? If the grassroots tactics are apparent and used by faculty and staff leaders, we wondered whether they adopted any distinctive vehicles for achieving bottom-up leadership, i.e. the way that consciousness raising, empowerment, relationship building, collective action and networking occurs on college campuses.

Grassroots leadership research also identifies a variety of tactics that are noted in the top-down leadership literature, but that are used differently among grassroots leaders on campus (Birnbaum 1992; Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin 2006). For example, leaders are typically encouraged to develop a vision. However, the way that a positional leader, such as a college president, develops a vision, and the way he or she uses it, may be different from the way that a grassroots leader develops and uses a vision. For example, a grassroots leader may develop a vision with others in their network and use consciousness-raising techniques in order for individuals to personally develop a connection to the vision. Those in positions of authority typically develop a vision with a more select number of individuals, such as their cabinet or team, and work to disseminate that vision to others in the organization. Communication tools are also noted as important in both the grassroots leadership literature and the top-down leadership literature. However, top-down leaders have access to different communication tools and resources for spreading their message (institutional and formal methods such as glossy brochures). Meanwhile, grassroots leaders need to rely on word of mouth and email. The differences are subtle, but suggest slightly different processes of working with people (a collective versus small group; relationally versus hierarchically; and access to different budget and resources to spread the vision). Building upon the grassroots leadership literature, this study advances our understanding of grassroots leadership within the academy by examining the distinctive tactics enacted by faculty and staff pursuing organizational change within institutions of higher education, bringing invisible strategies to light.

### *Tempered radicals framework*

In addition to drawing upon the grassroots leadership literature, this study is framed by the scholarship of ‘tempered radicals’ (Meyerson 2003; Meyerson and Scully 1995; Scully and Segal 2002). Tempered radicals are ‘individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations, and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organization’ (Meyerson and Scully 1995, 1586). The scholarship of tempered radicals represents an important and much-needed departure from the extant organizational leadership focused only on those in positions of authority. As Meyerson (2003) argues:

Tempered radicals reflect important aspects of leadership that are absent in the more traditional portraits. It is leadership that tends to be less visible, less coordinated, and less vested with formal authority; it is also more local, more diffuse, more opportunistic, and more humble than the activity attributed to the modern-day hero. (171)

It adds to the grassroots literature by examining individuals who are committed to staying within their organizations – similar to many faculty and staff on college

campuses. Also, grassroots literature focuses on collective action and tempered radicals emphasizes the continuum from individual to collective. Given that we are studying faculty, who often work more individually, the tempered radicals framework seems particularly helpful in explaining leadership among this group. Up to this point, however, the tempered radical framework has been examined almost exclusively within the context of for-profit corporations (Meyerson 2003; Meyerson and Scully 1995; Scully and Segal 2002). We examine the experiences and insights of faculty and staff that are not positioned within the hierarchical system of university administration, but have felt compelled to challenge dominant values, beliefs and practices within the organization.

In the corporate settings observed by Meyerson (2003), tempered radicals typically use moderate, incremental actions to challenge organizational norms and the status quo. By choosing among a range of tactics for fostering change that differ on dimensions of intent (i.e. exhibiting personal congruence versus bringing about broader organizational change) and scope of impact (i.e. influencing a small number of individuals versus swaying the opinions and attitudes of many organizational members), tempered radicals are able to construct a personalized and contextualized change framework that matches their varying identities and goals.

Meyerson (2003), for example, observed tempered radicals engage in a combination of five distinct change approaches based on their comfort and understanding of power dynamics: (1) resisting quietly in order to pursue personal congruence (e.g. taking time off work to observe important religious holidays not officially recognized by the organization or decorating one's desk/office to exhibit support for a particular social issue); (2) turning personal threats into opportunities by confronting discriminatory statements, assumptions and organizational practices; (3) engaging in negotiations to identify alternative solutions to interpersonal and organizational conflicts; (4) leveraging small victories to achieve larger organizational results; and (5) organizing collective action around a critical issue or organizational controversy (e.g. starting an employee forum to address the issue of employer-provided childcare). The approaches fall on a continuum from resisting quietly, that is most tempered, to organizing collective action that is the least tempered. The least tempered tactics are less incremental and often create more large-scale, visible changes. Tempered radicals are less likely to use these visible approaches as they can lead to backlash and can threaten their position and get them fired. Because they lack formal authority, tempered radicals rely on the cumulative effect of incremental and often subtle actions to foster change. The continuum of how grassroots leaders temper their approach in institutional settings is important, but it does not outline many of the specific tactics bottom-up leaders use. By combining the two frameworks – grassroots leadership and tempered radicals – we felt we had a broader and more comprehensive explanatory and descriptive lens.

## **Methodology**

This article originates out of a larger research project that investigated the phenomenon of grassroots leadership in five higher education campuses and post-secondary institutions. We chose an instrumental case study research design (Stake 2005) to foreground the phenomenon of grassroots leadership (including processes, activities, convergence with top-down leadership and tactics) and background the particular case setting. Our criteria for selecting cases were:



- (1) typical institution;
- (2) presence of more than one grassroots leadership effort;
- (3) grassroots efforts among faculty and staff;
- (4) different institutional types;
- (5) presence of a series of nested cases (e. g. environmentalism) with multiple individuals we could interview per case; and
- (6) located close enough to one of the researchers so that repeated visits could be conducted.

'Typical' was defined as institutions not characterized by an institutional commitment to innovation, activism and change. Because case selection is one of the most important criteria for informing trustworthiness in a case study, in order to select institutions for study, extensive document analysis was undertaken and a set of interviews were conducted in order to determine if the site was appropriate for study.

Through these criteria we identified five typical institutions of higher education representing different sectors (community college, liberal arts college, private research university, technical university and regional public university), assuming that grassroots leadership might differ by institutional type. A variety of studies have identified how institutional type impacts organizational processes (Birnbaum 1988; Kezar 2001). None of these institutions have a well-documented record of promoting innovation or grassroots change, so they are not special cases, yet the informants noted that some grassroots efforts were under way, and thus they serve as appropriate sites for case study.

### *Identification and recruitment of participants*

As an initial means of identifying grassroots leaders, we contacted influential academic staff, well-networked university administrators and administrative staff, and had an inside informant on each campus to ask for assistance identifying staff and faculty actively involved in grassroots (local, bottom-up) change efforts. Individuals identified as grassroots leaders were then contacted by a member of the research team and invited to participate in the study. After this initial round of participant recruitment, a snowball sampling technique was used to recruit additional participants involved in various movements on campus.

The grassroots changes championed by faculty and staff on the campuses that we studied were mostly oriented toward socially progressive movements. For example, they supported: environmentalism and sustainability plans; childcare centers and more flexible work conditions; campus and community partnerships to support community interests; efforts to diversify the campus; and innovative pedagogies like service or collaborative learning. The faculty and staff we interviewed were often from less traditional backgrounds – working class and faculty of color, for instance. The type of changes that faculty and staff are interested in often differ from the types of changes we heard that administrators were working on. Administrators typically talked about technology, globalization (which was different from internationalization in its focus on prestige and revenue), assessment, accountability and student centeredness (often a more commercial orientation; faculty talked about student success), for example. We are not suggesting all faculty or staff championed these changes. Other faculty and staff, more aligned with the corporate interests on campuses or not dissatisfied with the status quo, did not work for change.

We continued to seek additional research participants until we had exhausted our recommendations and saturated the sample. The findings presented in this article draw upon interviews conducted with 165 grassroots leaders – 84 staff (administrative staff) and 81 faculty (academic staff) members at five different institutions (an average of 33 individuals per institution) engaged in grassroots leadership. Faculty interviewed were from all ranks (lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor), and staff ranged from custodial staff to mid-level staff (assistant director in a student affairs office). There were more people of color and women than their proportional numbers.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

One-on-one semi-structured interviews provide the primary data for this study. Each participant was interviewed at least once, with the interview lasting approximately one hour. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The interview questions and prompts focused on four key themes to focus on issues related to our research questions:

- (1) the focus of the participants' change efforts;
- (2) tactics and strategies for creating change;
- (3) issues that enable and constrain grassroots leadership; and
- (4) strategies for maintaining resilience and navigating power and internal conflicts.

As noted under case selection, we also conducted informant interviews on each campus and performed a document analysis to understand the context. We visited each campus several times and for some visits stayed on-site for a week. During these longer campus visits, we also conducted observations of the campus, took field notes and collected additional documents (referred to in interviews), which were also analyzed.

Consistent with methodological norms of qualitative inquiry (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Miles and Huberman 1994), the systematic coding of texts (i.e. interview transcripts, institutional documents) served as the primary means of data analysis. Formal data analysis began during the initial stages of data collection: writing memos, notes at site visits and regular team meetings to discuss data at sites. The data analysis concluded with the write-up of the final research report. The frameworks reviewed in the literature section (grassroots tactics, tempered radicals strategies) were used to analyze data. We examined the data for differences by institutional type, and whether some aspect of the campus culture or institutional type was shaping the tactics used. We identified some differences that are highlighted, but there were greater similarities and only minor differences, so we chose not to highlight findings by institutional type. We also examined for differences based on the type of initiative – diversity or service learning for example.

### ***Trustworthiness***

We used several methods in order to ensure trustworthiness within the study. First, because case site selection is one of the primary ways to ensure trustworthiness within case study, we spent several months identifying the institutions where we would



conduct the study, being sure that these campuses had ample grassroots activity, but were also not distinctive campuses. Second, we spent considerable time on each campus. Researchers visited the campuses regularly – several times a month over a six-month period – or spent intensive intervals on campus, conducting interviews, meeting with informants, gathering new documents and observing campus life. Third, we interviewed both grassroots leaders, as well as other members of the campus (informants), in order to get a fuller picture of the work of grassroots leaders as well as the nested cases we were describing. Fourth, we had multiple researchers at most sites (two sites had primarily one researcher) who talked and journaled regularly, trying to provide richer interpretations of the data. Fifth, we had multiple individuals conduct data analysis and review the interpretation.

## **Findings**

As described in the grassroots and tempered radicals literature, the faculty and staff participants in our study sought to stimulate organizational change by creating an ideology and vision, raising people's consciousness/awareness of the problem, empowering others to act despite organizational opposition, and building relationships with others interested in the change initiative. We found also that, similar to Meyerson and Scully's (1995) studies of grassroots leaders in non-education sectors, faculty and staff were much more likely to take a tempered approach to stimulating change (though organized demonstrations were sometimes used when tempered strategies seemed insufficient).

We build upon the tempered radicals framework by showing how the tactics of higher education grassroots leaders are tailored to the organization of which they are a part. The tactics used by faculty and staff are distinctly shaped by and aligned with the culture and character of the academy. For example, the collegial and shared governance culture of the academy shaped a more tempered approach to community organizing, through tactics such as working with and mentoring students, hiring like-minded social activists, and utilizing existing networks. The teaching, research and service missions of the campuses shaped a more tempered approach to consciousness raising and creation of coalitions, through tactics such as leveraging course curricula, using the classroom as a forum, organizing intellectual opportunities, partnering with external stakeholders, and garnering resources and support. Finally, the intellectual climate shaped a more tempered approach to consciousness raising and the development of vision, through tactics such as creating professional development opportunities and using data and research to tell a story. We organize the data according to the grassroots literature, moving from ways they create vision through intellectual opportunities, through ways they mobilize through linking to students or forms of lobbying through working with external groups.

We illustrate the relevance of the tempered radicals framework and continuum of tactics. As we describe each tactic, we discuss ways it might be used in a less tempered and more tempered way. While Meyerson found certain approaches were inherently more tempered, we found that faculty and staff used each of these tactics in ways that were both tempered and more radical depending on the circumstance. We also expand the understanding of grassroots tactics within the institutionalized setting (highlighted in the tempered radicals framework) by demonstrating the impact of organizational context or sector on how the framework emerges and unfolds. Building on the importance of context, there were certain tactics that may work better within specific

institutional types. For example, grants within the research university, or working with students on the liberal arts campus, or leveraging the outside community at the community college. We describe some of these institutional differences when relevant as we describe the results. However, we should note that most of the tactics were used across the five campuses. While we analyzed for differences by institutional initiative or agenda (diversity versus service learning), we did not find significant differences and these various tactics were used among all the types of changes we followed. Also, faculty and staff used largely the same tactics.

A summary of the findings can be found in Table 1, which maps the on-campus tempered grassroots leadership tactics with the concepts derived from the social movement and tempered radical literatures. As we review each tactic, we discuss why it emerged as important, how it is tailored to higher education, how it varies by institutional type, and how it is tempered (if this is not apparent).

Table 1. Summary of study findings compared to the literature.

Grassroots strategy	Higher education process	Tempered approach
Vision	Intellectual forums Professional development	Vision based on traditional academic means of communication (forums) and professional development
Raise consciousness	Classrooms and course curriculum Intellectual forums Professional development Working with and mentoring students	Use traditional institutional processes for raising consciousness Often done quietly and behind the scenes Major emphasis on raising consciousness
Creating networks/ empowering others/ relationship building	Working with and mentoring students Hiring and mentoring like-minded activists	Part of normal relationship development with other faculty and students There is a major emphasis on networks and creating change more through personal interaction
Mobilizing people	Hiring and mentoring like-minded activists Utilizing existing networks Using data Partnering with key stakeholders	Work through traditional approaches of data collection or working through committees Mobilizing is used much less frequently, and bringing in external constituents or working with coalitions across the campus was more infrequent
Garnering resources	Gaining resources and support Using data	Try to work without resources or infrastructure and find behind the scenes money – most people on campus might not be aware of resources acquired for a long time, which keeps efforts behind the scenes
Persuasion and influence	Partnering with key stakeholders Gaining resources and support	Use more indirect forms of influence such as demonstrating value of the idea through obtaining a grant Unlikely to tap key stakeholders very often as seen as too overt

### *Organizing intellectual opportunities*

Faculty and staff are drawn to campus employment because they believe that the academy provides opportunities to debate interesting ideas. So, consistent with the intellectual climate of college and university campuses, a prominent grassroots leadership tactic used by both faculty and staff is the creation and organization of intellectual opportunities, where issues of interest can be intelligently discussed and debated. As one staff member recalled: 'Over the years, change has occurred bottom-up because of discussion series, reading groups, which opens issues up for debate and then something usually happens'. The types of intellectual opportunities run the gamut (one-time and sustained, formal and informal), but those that seem to create the most change are sustained intellectual opportunities, rather than one-time or short-term forums. Ongoing lecture series, periodic forums or luncheon groups were ways campuses continued dialogue on important issues they were planning to create change. These sustained opportunities provide a way for people to become informed of research that can be used to make a compelling argument for their change initiative, as well as to craft a vision. For example, one staff member describes a Latino forum and the role it played in crafting a grassroots leadership vision:

This was an exciting time on campus where the faculty and staff came together at lunches to discuss issues that are important for this population. People would present their research, staff members might describe an intervention. But we got together and generally talked about what the key issues were, informed by data and research. This also helped us to craft a vision.

In addition, sustained intellectual opportunities allow people to come together and form loose networks and meet allies. For example, a group of female faculty, which initially formed to discuss a particular feminist scholar's work, eventually evolved into the 'sisterhood network' grassroots leaders knew they could call for support, advice and encouragement. At another campus, a faculty member described the pivotal role that a variety of retreats (as intellectual opportunities) played in creating a network, which has sustained an environmental movement on campus:

These trips were more than just directed retreats where you go for an afternoon to Palm Springs or something. All tense and goal oriented. We went on these really intellectual excursions where we went on an elevator two miles underground salt flats in Southeast New Mexico to see plutonium. The intensity of that experience connected us deeply about environmental issues. It was just mind-blowing and we have all worked together the last eight years since that experience toward a common vision we identified there. These people were strangers before and we are best friends because of this type of intense experience.

Though research universities and liberal arts colleges emphasized intellectual opportunities more, this approach was used at every campus, most likely because it is an innocuous strategy that aligns with the intellectual climate of the institution and allows controversial topics to be explored. One downside that staff noted about the intellectual strategy is that sometimes it turns into a classroom mentality, where change is discussed (vision developed and consciousness raised) but not acted upon. They mentioned this had occurred related to the sexual harassment policy on campus, with staff equity several times over the years, and even with diversity at times. So the intellectual approach can be a double-edged sword, if members of campus do not follow up with action.

*Creating professional development opportunities*

Another tactic for creating change was faculty and staff development opportunities. Professional development played a similar role to intellectual opportunities by raising consciousness and helping to create a vision. However, professional development was more commonly used on community college campuses, regional public institutions and comprehensive public institutions, whereas intellectual opportunities were more prevalent at research universities and liberal art colleges. The development that faculty and staff describe tended to be sessions that they created within their own units or opportunities to go off-campus – they did not tend to bring up administratively sponsored professional development. Union contracts often designate support for faculty and staff development, which has become increasingly an important vehicle for campus innovation. Faculty and staff development brings in new ideas and awareness, and is particularly important for employees who tend to stay in their positions for much of their career (like faculty). Faculty and staff development is tempered in being considered an institutional approach and a regular part of institutional operations. Faculty members, focused on creating a more diverse campus at a public regional college, talked about the important benefits of professional development:

I think many people of color just assume that other people are racist and nothing can be done about it. But I've recognized that what we really need is training. If you teach a faculty member why something they said in a classroom might be offensive, I've seen that they do change. Because professional development is part of our contracts, people do participate and I think it can have a big impact. We are educators after all; appealing to our intellectual curiosity is an important way to create change.

One faculty member elaborated on how important this tactic has been at their community college:

It's hard to get people to think about white privilege and white awareness, and the workshops and courses that Nadine offered created a group of 30 white faculty who really understood this issue. Next week, we are all going to wear some controversial T-shirts that allude to white privilege. Based on the professional development that we've done, we are hoping to answer questions that people have based on our greater awareness. But until you are well informed, it's hard to educate other people. I can really see this work as part of our work as educators well.

Faculty and staff grassroots leaders talked about development opportunities being created through various offices:

The diversity office is always offering great training, and the curriculum committee has done that for faculty as well. The academic senate and the multicultural staff association have each generated different professional development well. So it comes from all sorts of different sources. The one on how to hire affirmatively was just amazing. We also had one on how to create change when you do not have support from the top.

Again, it is important to note that faculty and staff perceived bottom-up professional development – as opposed to that imposed by administrators – as legitimate.

Some of the professional development takes place on campus, but because several institutions were part of a state system, development also took place regionally and at the state level. The connection to other campuses engaged in change through multi-campus systems provided avenues for learning about tactics for change. Furthermore, multi-campus and state systems often offered professional development across

campuses that helped meetings with change agents often engaged in similar types of changes. One faculty member describes how she used the resources throughout the system to help create a women's center on campus, a women's faculty association, a sexual harassment policy and a women's leadership development program:

Connections to people from other campuses in the system through professional development helped me get the idea to start a women's center. I realize we really need one of those on the campus. I also used that network off-campus to help create a sexual harassment policy and the idea for the women's leadership development program. We have all the speakers come in from other campuses as well – people I met through the system professional development.

To foster change, this campus was able to leverage resources and ideas from within the campus network that would be unavailable to campuses outside the system. The change agents who are on multi-campus systems should be aware of this resource for their leadership efforts.

### *Leveraging curricula and using classrooms as forums*

Faculty and staff use courses and the broader curriculum to raise consciousness and develop awareness about their initiatives in progress. As one illustration, faculty concerned with environmentalism have developed student and colleague awareness by changing the curriculum, eventually translating this awareness into a sustainability plan for the campus. Not only faculty, but also staff, pointed to this strategy. Staff members noted how they created relationships and partnered with faculty to get their ideas included in classes. Staff also created co-curricular experiences to highlight issues in the residence halls and within student affairs programming.

Though many of the tactics discussed in this article have a particular flair shaped by academic culture, this strategy is unique to higher education – other organizations do not have a similar vehicle for imbedding new ideas, creating awareness or reaching members so systematically. Campuses with a strong teaching mission like the liberal arts college, community college and regional public university found leveraging curricula and classrooms to be a particularly powerful strategy. When used by individual faculty in individual courses, this strategy can be quite tempered. However, when infused more broadly into the curricula or communicated throughout the institution and to administration through the presentation of student assignments and learning, this strategy may be considered more radical. One faculty member fighting the trends toward commercialization on campus, for instance, had several students focus their senior thesis on the institution's new research center and some of the problems and conflicts of interest it could present. Another faculty member, focused on environmentalism, used course assignments for students to conduct research on making the campus more sustainable. He described these efforts:

So I had my students conduct small studies and they have been interviewing people across campus. They developed a report as a class that was presented to the administration for ways to think about creating more sustainable practices.

The tactic of leveraging curricula and classrooms can range from most tempered, when the faculty member is seeking to raise student consciousness and awareness on a particular topic related to the course, to less tempered, when the faculty member uses

students' raised consciousness as a way to publicly elevate the issue and perhaps shame the administration into changing dominant organizational practices.

Often a more radical approach is to advocate for programmatic or curricular requirement changes on campus. This is a more radical approach because it is public, involves multiple constituencies and has the potential to invoke greater resistance. However, it was a tactic used by some of our participants, including one progressive faculty who obtained a leadership position on the curriculum committee. That committee later created a process whereby faculty have their teaching observed, and people can observe other people teaching to enhance their pedagogical skills. They were able to get certain faculty who epitomized the type of teaching they think is important for student success, and to have them be part of the classroom observations. Several faculty mentioned how this has been pivotal for creating change in the classroom: 'There are dozens of new faculty who have been inspired when they've seen Professor Thomas teach – he is amazing with first-generation students and students of color'. Fewer faculty engaged in this more radical approach because the type of change invoked is fraught with political minefields and brings in greater resistance.

### *Working with and mentoring students*

Many faculty and staff spoke about the way they mentored students outside of the classroom in order to create change. In the words of one staff member:

Change happens on this campus when students are involved. In fact, I almost cannot think of a change where students have not been involved, and faculty and staff know this to be the case. But faculty and staff are always there behind the scenes working with them in one way or another – helping develop negotiation tactics, helping them develop reports, providing them with data, developing an idea for a forum, and the like.

Mentoring students emerged as important because faculty and staff know that the core mission of academic institutions is students and learning. Nothing is more compelling to administrators than having a major constituent group like students support an initiative. Working with students is also a form of coalition building, by aligning with a group that has power on many campuses. The strategy was perhaps the most important strategy at liberal arts campuses, but was also noted as critical at community colleges and teaching institutions. Most instances of faculty or staff working with students are behind the scenes and people across campus are unaware of this activity. Even if students mobilize, administrators will not be aware who was working with the students, when students were acting alone or with the support of others.

Faculty and staff described many different approaches to working with students, from creating a coalition with students, mentoring students to take direct action on campus, to working with student clubs. A faculty member and staff member both recalled how their work with students around gender equity issues on campus helped to create significant change:

I was the adviser for the first group of young women on campus who formed a chapter of NOW. These were really dynamic young women and because this was created as an all-female environment, this was really an undertaking and quite challenging. Through advising them, I helped them recruit, grow, bringing presenters to campus, build alliances, suggest policy changes (such as the sexual-harassment policy), and I think we made significant changes on campus. Through this group, it also helped us mobilize faculty and staff and create some networks on campus.



As this quote demonstrates, faculty and staff were able to make remarkable change working with students through various co-curricular activities. These activities also foster formal and informal networks between faculty and staff that created coalitions and networks that also help create change.

One staff member described the way they met with students to strategize a plan for improving staff equity, particularly for custodial and grounds-keeping staff:

Because students are such a central part of the campus, they give back as alumni. We knew that working with them could help our cause. So we had several meetings where we were strategizing what we might do to improve the situation for staff. Students decided they were going to ask for meetings with the administration. We worked together to develop some recommendations. We also met with the diversity committee to create a coalition – the students helped to build that bridge as they work with both groups, as well as influential faculty which staff do not have access to.

This example demonstrates the diverse ways that students and staff worked together: to mobilize various groups on campus, to craft data, to build coalitions and to strategize.

Only two of the campuses we visited were residential; most had commuter students. Some faculty and staff commented how students on their campus were not particularly involved because it was a large or commuter campus, and on some campuses students were not very progressive. While commuter campuses had more difficulty engaging students, faculty and staff noted some successes as long as you could identify even a small group of dedicated students, and described creating significant changes through these partnerships.

### ***Hiring and mentoring like-minded social activists***

Hiring like-minded, social activist faculty and staff is one of the most prevalent and tempered tactics used by grassroots leaders to create campus change, because faculty and staff involvement in the hiring and socialization processes is standard practice. Through the hiring process, grassroots leaders have the opportunity to create a critical mass or network of individuals with a commitment and passion for the issues on which grassroots leaders hope to make change. So, many faculty and staff grassroots leaders dedicate themselves to getting on hiring committees or lobbying members of hiring committees. This approach is tempered in that faculty and staff are expected to be involved in hiring and socialization processes. One story about a contentious hiring process shows this process of mobilizing around hiring:

So the economics department, which is all white males, is currently undergoing a hiring process. A group of us met to decide who should get on that committee, we knew they would be resistant to anyone we forwarded. I was able to get on the committee by working closely with the dean, but with much protest. Although I am a white male, I do not share the same politics of others in that department, I am much more progressive. They have complained to the dean, and then went to the academic senate, and now it's gone to the board. They actually have taken this issue to the board. Because they know how effective we are on creating change through hiring committees and they are scared.

The strategy, however, does not end with hiring but continues on into mentoring and socializing new faculty and staff. One staff member describes the process:

I feel it is important in moving towards institutional change to mentor new hires who are interested in the same issues that I am that can be allies. Myself and other activists meet

and we say, 'OK I'll go out to lunch with this new hire and get to know him better and you ought to lunch with this one'. We sort of divvy up getting to know all the new people and creating more allies.

Many participants spoke about the importance of relationships and personal connections for creating networks of like-minded people as a core strategy for creating change on campus.

At some institutions, particularly the research university and liberal arts college, faculty found themselves frustrated in their efforts to hire individuals who had an interest in the change initiatives that they cared about. The hiring process at these institutions focused on the criteria of research productivity and quality. Other characteristics such as leadership, organizational citizenship, commitment to students – often part of the characteristic of grassroots leaders – are not valued in the hiring process. One faculty member commented on the difficulty of using the strategy, but also commented on its importance:

We got a lot of flak from the administration when we tried to rethink hiring criteria. We know that one of the key ways to create change is to hire the next generation of campus leaders, but we really have our hands tied. Even the president called us out. We have had pockets of success.

### ***Garnering resources and support***

Unlike businesses, colleges and universities have very little research and development money to try out ideas (particularly for those outside the administration), so grassroots leaders need to find ways to obtain seed funding for a change initiative, often through grants and other external supports. On many campuses, a diversity initiative, campus and community partnership, or service learning projects got off the ground because of external funding. Grants were also used to mobilize people – providing a way to bring people together by funding meetings and conferences and help create collective action. Grants were also mentioned as critical to gaining influence, because obtaining a grant legitimizes an idea.

This is one strategy where there is a significant difference by institutional type. Overwhelmingly, faculty and staff at the research university spoke more often and more exclusively about the power of grant money for facilitating organizational change from the grassroots. As one staff member quipped: 'If you have an idea, people say go get a grant. The multicultural women's luncheon – that was based off a mini grant. Most of the things I can think of were created through grants'. Obtaining external grants and support is a tempered approach because the tactic is aligned with the normal operations of a college or university campus.

On many campuses, grant money provided the support and infrastructure for grassroots change initiatives, despite the turnover in grassroots leaders. These monies sustain an initiative despite a lack of formal support from institutional authorities. However, obtaining grants to support initiatives can also influence those in authority positions to see the change initiative as valuable or worthwhile, as described by this staff member:

Individuals can create change if they have grant money. Research centers can heighten awareness about different issues as well; it can host conferences and attract people to hear whatever the message is. For example, with diversity issues on campus, we were able to get grant support for our efforts. It seems that when you can attract attention from

external funders, the institution pays attention and is much more open to the kind of changes the faculty and staff are interested in, and down the line provides internal resources.

Balancing the interests of the grant funders, the demands of administration and the grassroots vision can be challenging. So, grassroots leaders who choose to utilize the grant funding as a strategy should develop ways to counter those challenges to the goals for organizational change.

### *Using data to tell a story*

Faculty and staff also describe how collecting and using data on campus to tell the story of the initiative, raise consciousness, mobilize action and garner support is a critical tactic for creating change on college and university campuses. Again, this tactic has a very tempered approach because it aligns with the academic culture, which tends to be evidence and research based. Perhaps obviously, the use of data is a particularly helpful strategy on the research university campus. One staff member at the research university declared: 'if you want change on this campus, just develop a study and present the results to those who have resources'.

However, simply presenting the results is not a sufficient strategy – grassroots leaders need to use the data to create a story about the issue or change initiative. A faculty member describes data storytelling as a grassroots leadership strategy:

I got in touch with a vice-president who I knew was interested in student success. He was able to give me a document based on some focus groups that have been conducted; the study just ended up getting shelved. There are some great charts and they could be used to talk about ways to make students more successful on campus. People on campus really respond to data. But you need someone like me willing to tell the story and advocate for change.

A staff member told a similar story:

So, I went directly into my boss and gave them this article about the plight of black males. I said this is what we deal with every day, we really need to take up the recommendations of this article. I couldn't believe it, he jumped right in and started sharing it with all of the executives. Major changes ensued.

As the faculty and staff members' stories demonstrate, grassroots leaders identify data and use it to compel people toward important changes they think need to be made. Grassroots leaders, however, need to be constantly vigilant to ensure that data (like intellectual opportunities) actually translate into action, because the tendency for inaction and paralysis is common.

### *Joining in – utilizing existing networks*

A unique feature of higher education campuses is 'shared governance' – it is culturally normative for faculty and staff (and students) to participate in committees that make decisions, solve problems and facilitate organizational change. While joining in this shared governance may seem more like a traditional organizational change tactic rather than a grassroots tactic, our participants characterized joining as a final strategy to be used once consciousness has been raised, vision communicated and informal

networks created. The goal is then to move to active influence and action. Joining in gives visibility to the grassroots change initiative as grassroots leaders can use campus committees and the shared governance structure as venues for speaking on the initiative and influencing upper administration.

One faculty member at the community college talks about the grassroots leaders' efforts to get on key institutional committees:

We recognize there were certain committees that if we were able to get on them such as the curriculum committee, we could really make a lot of change. We were able to get a multicultural requirement put in place. Also, this is a natural place for creating professional development opportunities, which are another one of our tactics. I've organized teaching conferences, workshops, teaching demonstrations, all sorts of learning opportunities since I was on the curriculum committee.

Another faculty member describes the joining in strategy:

How can I say this? We engineered, for lack of a better word, our placement on strategic committees. We got on the key academic senate committees, the curriculum committee, hiring committees, program review committee, budget allocation committee. We simply engineered our way on these committees, it was part of our change strategy.

Staff members had far fewer avenues for joining in, as there is not a tradition for staff to participate in shared governance on many campuses, or to be placed on administrative committees. Instead, staff focused on creating a value for their inclusion on committees as part of their bottom-up tactics for change. Once they had more access to committees, then they could start to infiltrate their ideas and perspectives. Joining in with formal institutional structures, such as working on a committee, is a challenging strategy for grassroots leaders for many reasons. First, tactics can easily become too tempered and issues watered down when attempting to work through official channels. One group commented that: 'diversity became morphed – it became separated from power and became celebratory, which was not our intent'. A second challenge is that the temporal nature and short time span of committees is misaligned with the complexity of issues usually addressed by grassroots leaders (environmentalism, diversity) and the length of time needed to accomplish grassroots organizational change.

### ***Partnering with key external stakeholders***

A final tactic particularly suited to the community college and liberal arts context is partnering with key external stakeholders. Like obtaining grants in the research university context, partnering with key external stakeholders (such as alumni and local business, political and community leaders) is a tactic for garnering support for and enhancing the validity of the issue. The support of key stakeholders can help to overcome internal resistance and inertia by mobilizing through influence. Local politicians and community organizations are able to influence community college operations because of the unique mission of community colleges. Similarly, alumni are able to influence the liberal arts college because they are depended upon for support and resources. However, this would be true on any campus with strong alumni relations and connections.

One particularly potent example of this tactic can be found on the community college campus. Several faculty and staff at the community college became active in

the politics of the surrounding area, and so were able to leverage their external sources to pressure the board to make necessary changes. The changes were related to diversifying the faculty, providing support services for students of color, creating more campus and community partnerships, creating leadership programs for students, and curricular changes to support students who need compensatory education. One staff member commented on this strategy:

I think it is natural because we're a community college to work with the community to create change. I know that the Asian-American leadership programs that I work with would not still be supported if we didn't have pressure from the community to maintain the program. They have seen the benefit and really support it.

As another example, a faculty member contacted some influential alumni when she faced obstacles on campus to reaching out to students of color and improving recruitment and retention. After a series of discussions, she was able to have these supportive alumni contact board members who eventually suggested that a plan (just like the one she put forward) be taken on by the administration of the campus.

### **Discussion: implications and future research**

This article addressed three research questions: (1) what are the main tactics of higher education faculty and staff grassroots leadership; (2) how are tactics distinctive or similar to those in existing literature; and (3) how do the tactics differ by context?

#### ***Research question 1***

We found that faculty and staff grassroots leaders seek to accomplish the same goals as grassroots leaders outside of the organization – to raise consciousness, create a vision for change, empower others to act, and create social change networks that extend the act of leadership beyond any one individual. However, our results highlight that, for the most part, faculty and staff grassroots leaders utilize nine higher education oriented tactics for achieving those ends that cut across various initiatives (e.g. diversity, technology, etc.): organizing extra-curricular intellectual opportunities; creating professional development; leveraging curricula and using classrooms as forums; working with and mentoring students; hiring like-minded social activists; garnering resources and support; using data to tell a story; joining in – utilizing existing networks; and partnering with key external stakeholders. Each of these tactics can be used in more tempered ways, such as mentoring students, and less tempered ways, such as joining students in a campus march. However, the findings demonstrate that faculty and staff generally chose more tempered approaches. Together, these nine higher education oriented tactics comprise a tempered grassroots leadership approach to organizational change that is aligned with academic culture and institutional methods, allowing the grassroots leaders to operate under the radar until the institution seems prepared to take on the initiative on a formal level. The professional identity of faculty strongly influences their approach to grassroots leadership, in that they connect it to their work as teachers, researchers and educators. This study also adds to our knowledge by showing that administrative staff use the same tactics and have a similar professional identity to faculty/academic staff – they see themselves as educators.

**Research question 2**

Theoretically, this study demonstrates the importance of the grassroots leadership literature and the tempered radical framework for understanding faculty and staff grassroots leadership. These frameworks are valuable lenses for interpreting the behavior and activities of these individuals on campuses and should be used in future studies. The few studies conducted have not drawn on any comprehensive conceptualization like the tempered radicals framework.

In relationship to the grassroots leadership literature, the results of the study suggest that faculty and staff can create on-campus change, without positional authority, operate bottom up and challenge the status quo and dominant ways of thinking, operating as grassroots leaders. This study demonstrates that faculty and staff grassroots leaders can use many traditional grassroots techniques and modify them to an institutionalized setting. Faculty and staff leaders also customize the techniques to the type of institutionalized setting. We suggest that faculty and staff who wish to create change on their own campus consider using as many of these nine tactics as possible, keeping in mind those that best align with the particular institutional type and culture of their college or university. Many faculty and staff that we spoke with describe how it took them and their colleagues years to understand effective tactics for creating change, because they lacked knowledge about approaches to change from the bottom up that work. Trial and error, as they noted, was very time consuming and could sidetrack progress. All the information available on leadership is targeted to those in positions of authority and proved to be unhelpful to their work.

Meyerson's (2003) tempered radicals framework was also helpful to understanding faculty and staff grassroots leadership. First, it helped identify everyday leadership that is often ignored on campuses. We know when faculty or staff are involved in direct and overt activism, but are less aware of these more tempered efforts to create change. By engaging in a tempered grassroots leadership approach, grassroots faculty and staff leaders were able to fly under the radar and push forward changes. On-campus grassroots leadership tactics can be grafted onto Meyerson's continuum, from resisting quietly (most tempered) to organizing collective action (least tempered). For example, working through and with students, socializing new colleagues and including material within courses are ways in which faculty and staff quietly resist the status quo. Using tactics that would fall in the middle of the tempered continuum, faculty and staff got on important campus committees, influenced the hiring processes, had students present classroom assignments to the administration and offered public intellectual forums to openly persuade change. Finally, at the least tempered end of the continuum, faculty and staff occasionally stimulated curriculum changes, participated in student and staff protests and/or created public intellectual forums that directly addressed more controversial issues (such as white privilege). Faculty and staff also wrestled for years to identify when to use more or less tempered strategies, and others struggled to understand if tempered strategies could be effective. These faculty and staff may have worked in non-institutional settings or been student activists, and were drawn to radical tactics. Many faculty and staff tried less tempered approaches and experienced backlash. Understanding the importance of a continuum of strategies helped faculty and staff leaders to rethink their leadership approach and be more successful in meeting their goals.

This study builds on the earlier literature on faculty and staff activism/leadership (for example, Astin and Leland 1991; Hart 2005, 2007, 2008; Theodore 1986). It



identifies a much broader range of tactics than earlier studies that focus on only networks or mobilizing. The findings demonstrate a progression of tactics, that move groups from vision to consciousness raising to action. This study builds on earlier research in higher education by showing a range of connected tactics – not isolated sets of tactics – and demonstrates how each tactic is aligned with grassroots leadership goals. For example, faculty and staff create a vision for change through intellectual opportunities, classrooms and curricula, and professional development. Second, they raise consciousness through professional development, committee work and intellectual opportunities. Third, they form change networks and allies through established committees, intellectual opportunities, grants, hiring and professional development. Next, faculty and staff mobilize people and build coalitions of change agents by working with students and external stakeholders. Then they garner resources and support through grants and using data. And lastly, they persuade and partner by working with external groups, intellectual opportunities, grants and using data. This more coordinated and comprehensive picture helps provide more concrete advice for grassroots leaders.

Instead of presenting one or two typologies or approaches (cooperative or confrontational) to creating change from the bottom up, this study suggests a much broader range of approaches (Hart 2008). Faculty and staff went back and forth between more and less confrontational and cooperative tactics over the lifetime of the change initiative. In addition, certain individuals within a group might be more confrontational while others are more cooperative. Some approaches were neither confrontational nor cooperative, and instead fell somewhere in the middle. Thus, the study suggests that any narrow typology of approaches is not capturing the breadth of tactics and strategies that are customized to the circumstance. The study identified how more than identity, but also institutional context, shapes approach (in terms of approaches that are more likely to be successful in certain institutional types), creating a greater understanding of the role context plays. The findings suggest change agents should pay attention to institutional culture and climate as they craft their strategy.

### ***Research question 3***

While the tempered grassroots leadership approach was utilized on each campus, we did find that there was some variation by context in the effectiveness and pervasiveness of the various tactics. For example, obtaining grants and using data were more effective and pervasive at research universities, curricular changes at the teaching institutions, working with external (alumni and community) groups at the community college and liberal arts campuses. In addition, it appears there are certain tactics that tend to be used across different campuses and that grassroots faculty and staff leaders should consider using, such as being placed on strategic committees, hiring and socializing new faculty and staff, professional development and working with students. While sometimes these played out differently, based on institutional culture or type of institution, these approaches generally played an important role in grassroots change efforts. We believe our findings suggest that bottom-up change agents should be aware of the institutional context and adjust tactics as necessary.

### ***Future research***

Future research might examine challenges that emerged in using these grassroots tactics, such as issues being watered down in leveraging committees, intellectual

forums not moving to action, navigating the political minefields when curricular changes are attempted, finding students on commuter campuses and engaging them in change, sustaining momentum, or hiring criteria at research universities. For example, grassroots change initiatives, such as diversity, can be morphed when adopted by formal university committees that ultimately define the issue and choose the focus for the institution; in other words, when [the initiative] enters the system, the system can change it. Participants in the study noted that when grassroots leadership is aligned with academic culture, such as through the use of the intellectual forum strategy, a 'classroom mentality' can develop where change is discussed but not acted upon. This 'classroom mentality' challenge was mentioned in relation to sexual-harassment, staff equity and diversity policy several times at different institutions. Sustaining momentum on complex grassroots change initiatives can be challenging, because the length of time needed to make organizational change is misaligned with the short-term life span of committees and individual involvement in the initiative. These and other challenges associated with exercising tempered grassroots leadership in colleges and universities warrant further study given their probability of affecting the success of grassroots leadership by faculty and staff. In addition, this study should be replicated in other countries in which academic and administrative staff have different roles, or more or less power to see if this impacts the nature of tactics.

In summary, our results suggest that faculty and staff have at their disposal multiple tactics that can be used to stimulate organizational change, even when the change envisioned is counter to the status quo and dominant culture. For the most part, we advise faculty and staff to adopt the tempered approach, modifying tactics based on resistance faced, in order to maintain their jobs so they can continue to work toward the changes they care about.

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